

### Honoring Local Military Heros



On May 1, Congresswoman Napolitano honored veterans with a military medals presentation at the Pico Rivera Senior Center.



California National Guard Lieutenant Colonel Tom Lasser, and Brigadier General John Gong joined her in presenting the medals and other honors to 11 local veterans who served in either WWII or the Korean War.



“This I have known in the service for 36 years, so I know what this ceremony means to veterans. These men have spent a great part of their lives as veterans, and their patriotism and commitment should never be forgotten,” commented the General.



Napolitano told the veterans, “You deserve these honors because you’ve earned them. You have also earned the benefits that you are entitled to, but we need you to speak up when they are being cut. You need to let this administration know your concerns.” The Congresswoman also gave each veteran a “Certificate of Congressional Recognition,” a Congressional pin and a U.S. flag.



### Fighting for Mental Health and Employment Services

At the end of 2003, the President signed into law S.1156, an omnibus veterans healthcare bill, which included language from Rep. Napolitano’s H.R. 3442, the Veterans Mental Health and Back to Work Act. Napolitano’s language instructed the VA to provide the following services to veterans with mental illness:

1. Work skills training and development services
2. Employment support services
3. Job development and placement services



VA is working on implementation of these services.



Congresswoman Napolitano is also highly concerned with the inadequate mental health care given to soldiers returning from service in Iraq and Afghanistan. Reports have indicated that the VA may not have enough mental health care providers to meet demands, and that instead of properly screening all veterans for mental illness, particularly post traumatic stress disorder, VA and DoD are relying on returning servicemen and women to self identify their own mental health needs. She is working to determine the best way for Congress and the VA to ensure that veterans get the care they need.



“We joined the military as young men, not caring about medals. We just did the best we could. Now, we are receiving these awards, and it’s nice. I appreciate it, and it means a lot to veterans, especially for our families and the ones that have passed away,” Sgt. Richard Almeida noted, humbly expressing his appreciation.



Napolitano presents medals to local veterans.

### Honored Veterans:

**Sergeant Richard S. Almeida**, U.S. Army, 136<sup>th</sup> Regiment-33<sup>rd</sup> Division WWII, La Puente

**Private First Class Rodolfo Casas**, U.S. Army, 32<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment 7<sup>th</sup> Division, Korean War, Pico Rivera

**Private First Class Clyde Davis**, U.S. Army, 3860<sup>th</sup> Quartermaster Company, WWII, Santa Fe Springs

**Staff Sergeant Sam Herrera Jr.**, U.S. Air Force, 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Unit - European Theatre, WWII, Montebello

**Private First Class Louis Lovato**, U.S. Army, Company C 314<sup>th</sup> Engineer Combat Battalion, WWII, Norwalk

**Corporal Joe Romero McAfee**, U.S. Army, Battery B 717<sup>th</sup> AAA Gun Battalion, Korean War Whittier

**Private First Class Henry H. Ramos Jr. (Deceased)** U.S. Army, 163<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment, WWII, La Puente

**Private First Class Ramon Rios Reyes (Deceased)** U.S. Army, 298<sup>th</sup> Quartermaster Service Company, WWII, Montebello

**Private First Class Edward Martinez Rodriguez**, U.S. Army, 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, WWII, Los Angeles

**Seaman Robert Dominguez Tamayo**, U.S. Navy, Korean War, Whittier

**Sergeant Marciano Valente**, U.S. Army, Company C 14<sup>th</sup> Infantry & APO 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, Korean War

### Federal Services

**Health Benefits and Services:** Closest VA medical facility, VA’s health programs and determining eligibility, visit [http://www1.va.gov/health\\_benefits/](http://www1.va.gov/health_benefits/) or call 1-877-222-8387.

**Education Benefits and the GI Bill:** <http://www.gibill.va.gov/> or 1-888-442-4551.

**Compensation and Pension Benefits:** <http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/index.htm> or 1-800-827-1000.

**Employment Services:** Job training, employment resources, VA’s featured employers and vocational rehabilitation services, visit <http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre/index.htm> or call 1-800-827-1000.

**Home Loans:** <http://www.homeloans.va.gov/> or 1-888-869-0194

**Burial and Memorial Services:** <http://www.cem.va.gov/> or 1-800-827-1000.

For services from Rep. Napolitano’s office, including assistance obtaining medals, military records and information about the VA, contact Roel Saldivar at 562-801-2134.

# HOW THE PROPOSED '05 REPUBLICAN BUDGET WOULD FAIL OUR VETERANS

- Provides a totally insufficient increase (less than 2 percent) for veterans' healthcare services. This is not enough to maintain current services and nearly \$3 billion less than veterans' organizations agree is needed.
- Increases fees for 1 million current veterans utilizing VA health services.
- Continues to penalize survivors of veterans by only giving them only 35 percent of their benefit when they reach age 62.
- Forces the nearly 400,000 military retirees with a service-connected disability to give up one dollar of their pension for every dollar of disability pay they receive.
- Slashes funding to maintain sufficient number of federal employees to process disability and other benefit claims, even though there is a major backlog. Funding cut means veterans must wait longer to get their disability, education, pension, housing and employment benefits.
- Cuts funding for long-term care by \$294 million (from \$3.7 billion in 2004 to \$3.4 billion in 2005). This cut would mean that 8,000 fewer patients could be served.
- Reduces the number of VA home loans by 50,000 by denying veterans a second VA home loan.
- Slashes funding for medical and prosthetic research by \$50 million (from \$820 billion in 2004 to a proposed \$770 billion.) This cut would occur just when troops in Iraq and Afghanistan are coming home with major injuries, including loss of limbs.

## Democratic budget (not passed), supported by Rep. Napolitano:

- *Increases veterans health care by \$2.5 billion.*
- *Provides \$2 billion to restore full survivor benefits to families of military retirees and to improve military housing for 50,000 families.*
- *Provides targeted pay raises for enlisted personnel.*

## Key Legislation

Committed to providing our nation's brave veterans and their families with the services and benefits they have earned, Congresswoman Napolitano is a cosponsor of the following bills:

**H.R. 2318, Assured Funding for Veterans Healthcare Act**, creates a guaranteed, adequate and predictable funding stream for veterans' health care by basing funding on the number of veterans enrolled for services and medical inflation for hospital-related services.

**H.R. 1716, Veterans Earn and Learn Act**, increases the VA home loan guaranty amount, improves the on-job-training and apprenticeship programs under the G.I. Bill, and provides employment assistance.

**H.R. 4231, Department of Veterans Affairs Nurse Recruitment and Retention Act**, authorizes VA to implement flexible alternative work schedules to enhance nurse recruitment and retention of VA nurses.

**H.R. 4248, Homeless Veterans Assistance Reauthorization Act**, increases funding for homeless veterans programs and grants, and makes the VA's sexual trauma counseling a permanent program.

**H.R. 4175, Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act**, increases the rates of disability compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency compensation for survivors of certain service-connected disabled veterans.

## Congresswoman Grace F.Napolitano

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